

VERNA HOGBERG VOGLE

As told to Maxine Durney July 12, 1989

and revised December 12, 1989

I sometimes say my parents were both born in Sweden, but I am an American, born in a Swedish hospital in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Mother was Effie Westlund, born in Sweden in 1878. Her parents, Erick and Lotta, who were farmers, brought her to Southern Minnesota when she was four and a half. Her father, who came from the Stockholm area of Sweden, took out his citizenship papers here, and that enabled Lotta, my grandmother, and my mother to become citizens.

My father, Henning Hogberg, came from Swarta, Sweden, when he was 20 years old, to his uncle in Lake Benton, Minnesota. In Sweden, my father's name had been Henning Gustafson, but here he changed to Hogberg, his uncle's name. I do not know what employment my father had in rural Southern Minnesota, but he was a conductor on the Minneapolis street railway system when he and my mother were married in 1908. I was born in 1913.

My parents did not teach us to speak Swedish, the old country language; they wanted us to speak English, without an accent.

Later my father farmed land in North Dakota; I lived there until I was 12 years old, when my mother, sister, my brother and I returned to Minnesota.

In 1935, a girlfriend and I came from Minnesota to Petaluma. We were going to stay for one year, but we never did go back, except to visit. She was Violet Anderson, who married Thomas Hale in 1938. The Hales had a dairy on the lower slopes of Mt. Burdell where McGraw Hill is now.

I had an aunt in Novato, Marie Westlund, with whom I had lived some of the time in Minnesota. When she became a widow, with five children, she moved to California. I lived with her at first, working at Woolworth's in San Rafael over Christmas and during inventory.

Then I learned to candle eggs at Nye and Nissen in Petaluma, in 1936. In 1937, I came to Poultry Producers of Central California in Petaluma, where I was an egg candler until I became an inspector, and that is what I did the last nine years that I worked at Poultry Producers.

During the war, at the U.S.O. dances in Petaluma, I met Vernon Vogle, a soldier from Michigan, who was stationed out at Two Rock.

Vernon and I were married in 1948, and on his return after the war, I went to the East Coast where he was stationed. I returned to PPCC a few times to work as a candler while waiting to join him overseas.

When I became an inspector in 1942 or '43, progress had come along, and relieved the women of lifting the heavy wooden cases, holding 30 dozen eggs, that came from the ranches. Men now lifted the cases onto the bench for the candleers, and were there

usually to turn the cases as well. The girls worked into cartons holding one dozen eggs, and put three cartons at a time onto a moving belt in front of them, putting a tag in one of the three cartons. The tag had the dual purpose of identifying the candler, and keeping a count on how many of each grade the candler had found in each lot..a lot is one rancher's delivery of eggs.

Egg inspectors' duties were to inspect a sample amount of each candler's work; if problems were found we had to look at more of that person's work.

There were four lines of candleers and one inspector for each line. We stood at the end of the line, and took three dozen eggs off the belt at a time to inspect. Blood spots were "no no's" as the average housewife who opened an egg and saw a blood spot would throw the whole egg away. We had to go back to the candler with even one blood spot. A "blind check" was different. It is a break in the shell but not through the membrane lining the shell. It can be seen through the candling light. We went back to the candler only if more than one was found, or if one was found in consecutive inspections. We also looked for the size of the air cell which denoted the freshness of the egg; and for clean shells: top quality eggs are clean; lesser grades may have small amounts of dirt on the shell. We also watched for the size of the eggs...no underweight or overweight eggs.

Candling lights were enclosed in a black metal box-like container, with an opening in front which the candleers looked

down on. The inside was painted white, and it contained a mirror and a magnifying glass, that magnified what was inside the egg. We passed the egg in front of this light. You worked quickly. You were holding four eggs and rolling them before that light.

Inspectors inspected all grades but did more of the top grades. Ranchers got less for the lower grades. If I found too many coming down that were not graded properly, I went to the candler's bench to look at her eggs. If she had done quite a few eggs by that time I might go in back to check a case that had been done.

No, there were no arguments, but I'm sure there were some hurt feelings.

I was also certified and bonded to check eggs that were to go overseas. The army sent their own inspectors.

When the union came in I was still a candler. Candlers and miscellaneous workers in the egg department joined the Butcher's Union [The Amalgamated Meat Cutters' and Butcher Workmen of North America, Local #364]. Pay was 50 cents per case, and candlers were to candle not less than 20 cases nor more than 30 cases per day. Inspectors were paid the same as the highest candler plus 10 cents an hour.

The strike took place while I was still a candler, and lasted but a few hours. That was not a very important strike. It just showed that we had good management people. The whole strike took place because one person was going to be laid off. We were on piece work, so we couldn't be paid for the hours we

missed.

I continued my membership in the Union, but I did not go to meetings after I became an inspector, nor did Fritz Boysen, who was chief of the inspectors, or the other inspectors.

The truck drivers and the men who worked on the platform belonged to the Teamsters' Union. The men at the end of the rollers were members of the Butcher's Union, I think.

The most canders we had at one time was 207; and also many miscellaneous workers...men putting up full cases; girls keeping the canders' benches supplied with "one dozen" cartons; people needed at the end of each line taking cartons off the belt to pack into full or half cases to fill orders. The miscellaneous workers were paid by the hour, not piece work as the canders were.

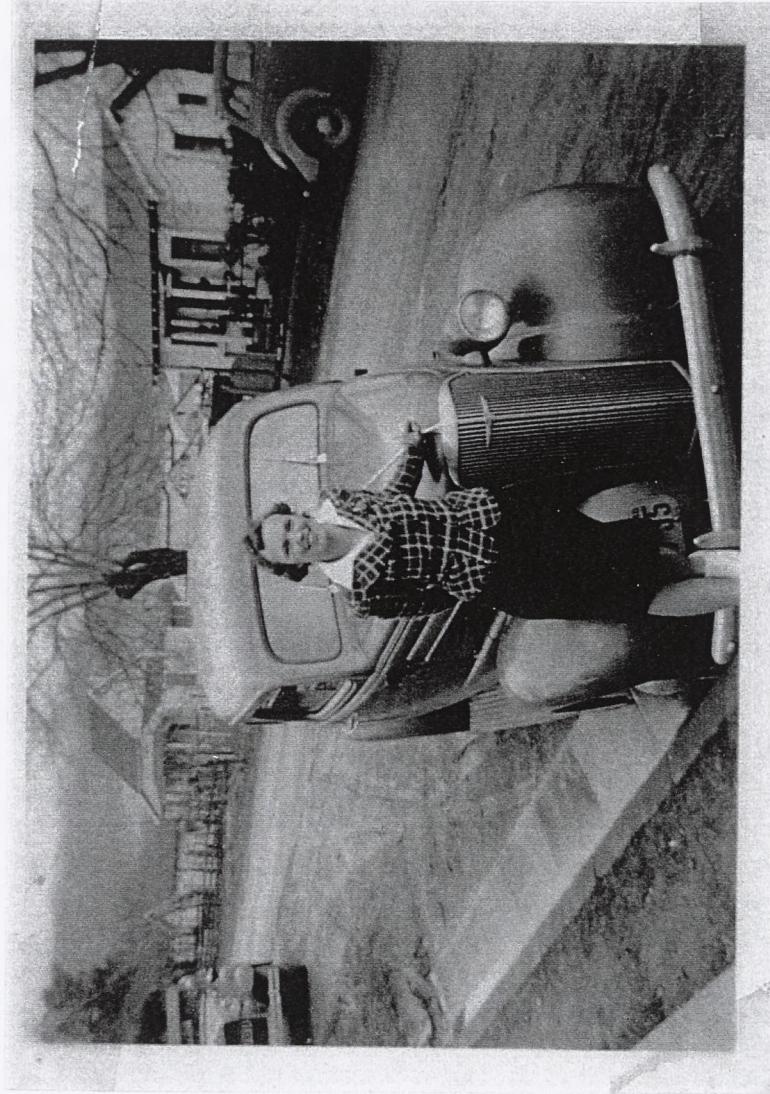
During World War II years we worked nine-hour days and some Saturdays. We stood all day, but the room we worked in was comfortable, temperature wise. We had short breaks during the day.

The other inspectors were Fritz Boysen (a good person), Lena Mello, Harvey Braren, Ed Schaad and Henry Nommsen...at one time. Later Rose Langdon and Gladys Lauderback. Of all these nice people, I am the only former egg inspector of Petaluma Poultry Producers still alive.

Later, in the fifties, when Poultry Producers put in the candling machine, Ralph Church was in charge. Agnes Eslick and I were canders.

You stood with a curtain around you. The eggs were graded for size electronically. The eggs travelled over a light, and you looked for blood shots, checks, etc. We were paid by the hour.

When I retired I took tests to work in the Federal Service, and spent the rest of my working years commuting to San Francisco where I worked for the Veteran's Service, in the regional office, on claims made by the veterans for pensions and schooling. I had to leave Petaluma at 5:30 in the morning, on the Greyhound Bus, but I loved it. Later, Golden Gate Transit came in and Veteran's Administration approved flex hours when the transit system offered more trips.



Verna Hogberg [Vogel] no date. Petaluma

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Oral History Program

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PLACE PETALUMA, CALIFORNIA

DATE _____

Verna M. Hogle
(Interviewee)

Maxine Kortum Durney
(for the Petaluma Historical Museum)

MUSEUM JACINTO DE ANGELATRE
PETALUMA HISTORICAL LIBRARY AND MUSEUM
Oral History Program
Family History Questionnaire

Name Birthdate Birthplace Deceased? Date
Parents* HENRY HOGBERG SWARTA, SWEDEN

EFFIE WESTLUND 1878 SWEDEN

Brothers & Sisters MELVIN HOGBERG
EONA HOGBERG (DECEASED)

Grand-parents* _____

Spouse VERNON VICTOR VOGLE

Children _____

Grandchildren _____

*Please include maiden name of mother and grandmothers.

THANK YOU!

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PETALUMA HISTORICAL LIBRARY AND MUSEUM
Oral History Program
Narrator Personal Information Questionnaire

Name HOGBERG VERNA VOGLE VERA MARIE HOGBERG
Last First Middle (Maiden)

Address 43 BURLINGTON DRIVE PETALUMA

1970

Marital status: Married 1948 Single _____ Divorced X Widowed _____

Birthdate 9-9-1912 Birthplace MINNEAPOLIS

Length of residence in Petaluma (or Sonoma County) 1936 TO PRESENT

Education: Elementary school _____

Secondary school CLARISSA PUBLIC HIGH, MINN. Grad _____

College ST CLOUD TEACHER'S COLLEGE MINN Grad 1 YEAR

Other EVENING CLASSES IN SANTA ROSA

Occupation(s) or former occupations(s) _____

CANDLER, INSPECTOR AT POULTRY PRODUCERS PETALUMA

ADJUDICATOR AT VETERAN'S ADMINISTRATION, REGIONAL OFFICE SF.

Travels MY HUSBAND WAS STATIONED IN BERLIN AND ITALY

WE WENT TO MOST OF THE COUNTRIES OF WESTERN EUROPE

Organizations, clubs UNION WHILE I WORKED CANDLING EGGS

Other special interests _____

Additional comments _____

THANK YOU!